

**Single Family Design Guidelines Update
Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update**

Steering Committee

**Meeting #23 Notes
April 22, 2005**

Steering Committee members: Chair Dianne Channing, Bruce Bartlett, Joe Guzzardi, Vadim Hsu, Charmaine Jacobs, Bill Mahan.

Staff: Bettie Weiss (City Planner), Jaime Limón (Supervising Planner), Heather Baker (Project Planner).

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

III. Administrative Items

Next meetings tentatively scheduled for May 13th and 20th.

Staffmember Jaime Limón gave a report on the AIA meeting which Staff presented at on April 19th. Mr. Limón provided a summary of some of the comments made by the AIA at the meeting regarding the Guidelines/NPO Update process. (Note: this Administrative item actually occurred in between discussions of Item V).

IV. Steering Subcommittee Reports

V. Continued Discussion: Draft Floor to Lot Area Ratio Proposals: Follow-Up Discussion Issue Paper II

- a. Staff Presentation:** Updated Floor to Lot Area Ratio poster including additional home images and Staff's analysis of the photo and FAR patterns shown by the poster. Floor plan case studies were also presented, including a "virtual tour" of an approximately 2000 square foot floor plan from a builder's website:

<http://www.morrisonhomes.com/Pages/FindingHome/Community.aspx?CommunityID=484>

b. Public Comment

Connie Hannah: Is impressed by the League of Cities list serve answers regarding FARs. Many jurisdictions have FAR's, of those that don't have FARs, many jurisdictions want them. She is sure none of the jurisdictions wanted to go through the difficult process to get them. Suggests Steering Committee starts with conservative numbers knowing what is likely to happen in later adoption stages.

Timothy Harding: First comment is regarding the video walk-through shown by Staff on the screen. Videos can make spaces look much bigger than they really are. Without a sense of scale and an architect's opinion, it is hard

to tell what the video is portraying. Houses he's seen under 2000 square feet don't look "big enough". Strongly encourages giving credit for placing a garage in the back of a lot. Underground garages should be given similar credit and are especially beneficial because no driveway along the side is necessary. Regarding FAR charts – 1800 to 2225 square feet is still much too small for a 6,000 square foot lot.

Michelle Giddens: Driveway and garage configurations do have an impact on square footage which can be built on a lot. Going toward a higher FAR standards is good. Modestly higher FARs could keep neighbors and ABR happy and still allow for people's need to expand. In her case she needs more space for herself and her son.

Cathie McCammon: Representing La Mesa Neighborhood Association and the League of Women Voters.

League of Women Voters: Prefers a formula rather than a table. There is a concern regarding irregularly shaped lots, such as in the Waterfront. If you don't have a regular rectangular lot, the square footage of the lot won't necessarily be known. Would like to see the Montecito Hillside FARs applied for the larger lots, but as requirements rather than guidelines for fairness. Beyond 5 acres, however, perhaps FARs are not as necessary. The League supports a low FAR of 0.30. Garages can play a large role in changing the FAR of a home whether or not they are included. For example, including a garage in a calculation would change the FAR calculation up to 0.38 for a previously 0.31 FAR home on a 6000 square foot lot. Similarly, a 0.40 FAR, once a garage was added would become 0.48. It would be more clear and straightforward for people to see the garage included. There may be pressures for people to raise proposed FAR allowances, hope that there is at least one option with low 0.30's. As a group, the Steering Committee could forward two to three options to the decision-makers. Last, for homes beyond 85% of the maximum FAR, the project should not require any mods., a landscape plan should be required and view protection should be considered. One concern with a one-story house being too large is loss of open space and landscaping.

La Mesa Association supports a .30 FAR limit. The Association rejects the idea of FAR bonuses. A variance should be required to exceed a maximum FAR. Note that existing FAR averages for built homes in the City are closer to 0.17, not even 0.2. When comparing FARs with other jurisdictions, be sure to adjust for garages as well so that it is even comparisons (for example, Goleta's 0.31 FAR).

Naomi Kovacs: Citizen's Planning Association (CPA) Executive Director. CPA was involved in original NPO process. Subjective tools now used need to be replaced with codified standards. CPA wants a maximum FAR not to exceed 0.30 for smaller lots and does not support the max. and bonus concept. If the Steering Committee wants to include this "loophole", then CPA expects findings such as those submitted in the correspondence letter on Saturday 4/16/05 to be applied to all of the FAR levels. With regard to large lots, CPA

recommends the City uses Montecito's guidelines. Commented regarding appropriate garage square footage allowance. There should be a clear, enforceable ordinance.

Claudia Madsen: Would like to see the discussion get back to the basic issue. Quoting here from the distributed e-mail from Helene Schneider, "the ultimate question is what is the appropriate absolute max. FAR?" No one on Saturday spoke in favor of a two-tier bonus system. We all want clear quantifiable standards that can be enforced. Will rewrite submitted written statement. Hold the line on a 0.30 FAR on a 6000 square foot lot as that is a big house. The average FAR for all parcels is 0.17. Variance procedures will make appropriate allowances for quirky lots. We need to keep in mind to make sure planning lingo used is understandable to the public. Agrees with the League of Women Voters and La Mesa Association and CPA.

Dorothy Fox: Would like to have more Saturday meetings because it seems like more people would be able to come with more diverse opinions. The Mesa is a hotbed of little houses with residents who want to change them. No one is keeping people on the Mesa, but they may not be able to afford to move. A house much too small will become undesirable to the people living in it.

Mac Bakewell: Regarding whether to look at houses as a public issue or from a neighbor's point of view - neighbor's are public and no one is impacted more than neighbors. This is called a Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance because it is all about neighbors. The real issue is the population doubling every 40 years now.

After Additional Steering Committee Discussion:

Partial Committee Consensus (Joe Guzzardi opposed): Change the garage allowance to 500 sq. ft. for lots smaller than 20,000 sq. ft. and add this figure into the table's square footage numbers.

Committee Consensus: Revise the Draft FAR Proposal table as follows:

- Only apply the FAR table regulations to two-story homes.
- Use Table #3's rough maximum square footage and FAR numbers, but recalculate to avoid "jumps" in square footage by using a formula method.
- Add a garage allowance of 750 sq. ft. for lots greater than 20,000 sq. ft. into the table's square footage numbers.
- In the Application Routing and Trigger Mechanisms Issue Paper, explore the idea of homes larger than 70% of the max. FAR triggering ABR review.
- Rather than having a "Max." and a "Max. + Bonus," trigger additional review for homes larger than 85% of the Maximum FAR square footage.
- Change table so that lots over 15,000 sq. ft. have FAR guidelines only.

VI. Review Upcoming Schedule

VII. Adjourn